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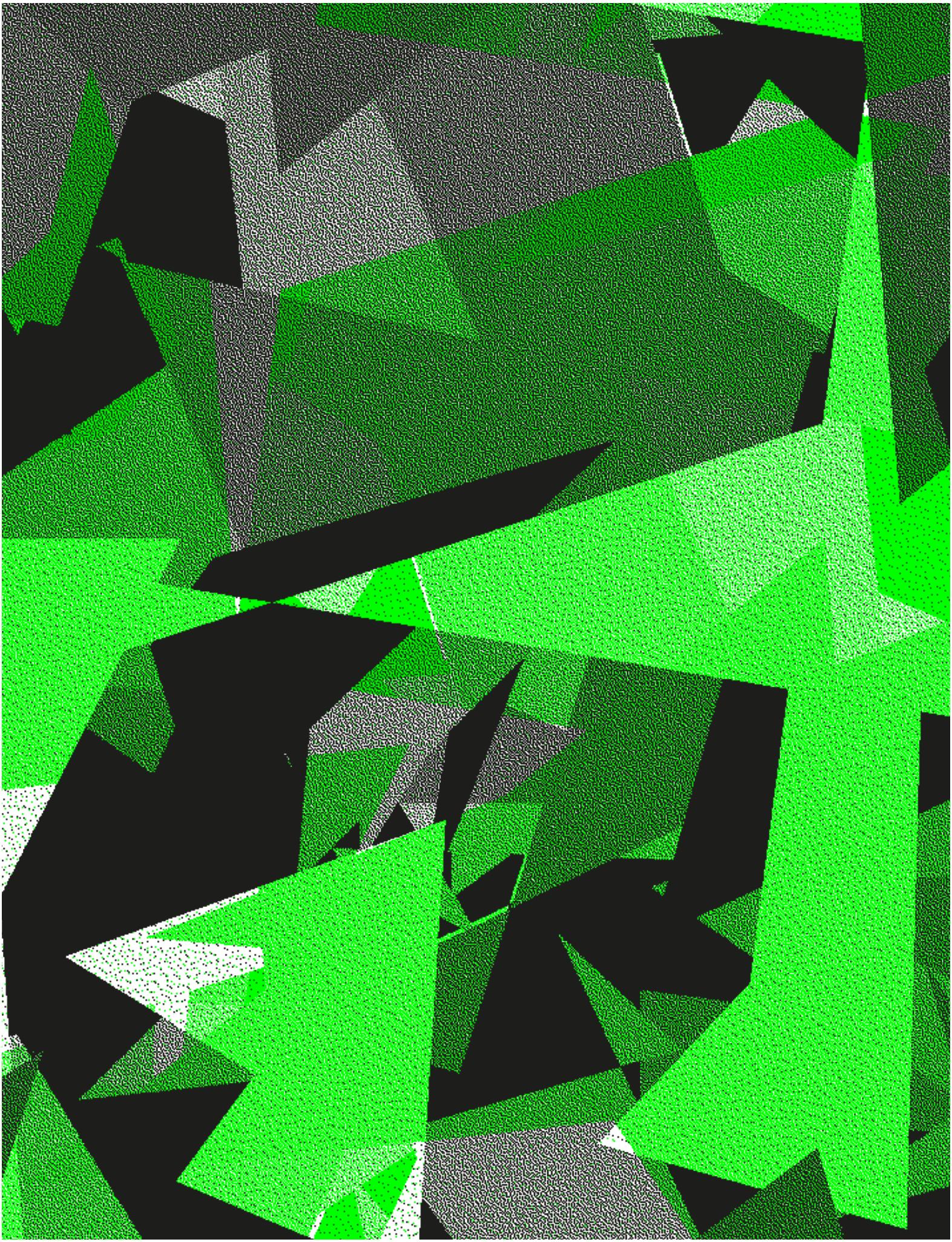

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Genocidal Warfare and Permanent Security Entwined: Ukraine and Gaza

Çağla Demirel and A. Dirk Moses

Ernst Toller's *No More Peace!* (1936) depicts the age-old question of war versus peace as basic human tendencies. In the play, Napoleon's insistence on humanity's inclination toward war clashes with Saint Francis's vision of innate peace. The people of Dunkelstein, a small "experiment" state, are easily manipulated into war hysteria by a false declaration of war. Paranoia paves the way to repression and dictatorship even in the absence of an actual enemy. Ordinary citizens passively accept the chaos as inevitable, and, as one character cynically observes, "the voice of Reason" becomes "High Treason" in wartime.[1]

This theme, of course, is by no means confined to *No More Peace!* Rather, it has inspired a series of classics across time: from Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace* (1869) to Jean Giraudoux's pacifist play *The Trojan War Will Not Take Place* (1935) to Kurt Vonnegut's novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969). These literary examples echo a discussion that dominates the scholarly pursuit of international peace and security. Many philosophers, historians, and political theorists have also asked whether humans are essentially inclined to violence and conflict or toward cooperation and coexistence. From Thomas Hobbes's vision of endless war to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's belief in the goodness of human nature to Immanuel Kant's idea of "perpetual peace," debates on the spectrum between war and peace have shaped the liberal international order by laying the foundations of international law and the institutions built to uphold it. All this has happened with one overarching aim: to spare humanity from the scourge of war and genocide—only to fail utterly, terribly, and repeatedly.

The nation-state system and liberal institutions established during and after World War II—including the United Nations, its Security Council, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide, and the Geneva Conventions of 1949—sought to avoid war and prevent genocide by managing international tension through international law and diplomacy or by intervening in conflicts through collective security arrangements.[2] From one perspective, despite its stark failures in many postwar conflicts—mainly in the postcolonial world, ranging from the Biafra-Nigeria war in the late 1960s to the genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994—this system and its institutions have shown impressive resilience: Global conflagration has been avoided.

From the perspective of nations and their civilians devastated by armed conflict, however, the avoidance of World

1 Ernst Toller, *No More Peace! A Thoughtful Comedy*, trans. Edward Crankshaw (Bodley Head, 1937), 67.

2 John G. Ikenberry, "The End of Liberal International Order?," *International Affairs* 94, no. 1 (2018): 7–23.

War III is cold comfort. Today, the Russian occupation of and military expansion into Ukraine and the Israeli occupation of and military expansion into Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon—to name only two current flashpoints—have been destabilizing entire regions and leading to mass demonstrations around the world. Public opinion globally, including in Europe, is generally against Israel's destruction of Gaza and its Western backing in particular. Outside Europe, the Western support of Ukraine is seen as partisan. Indeed, this Western partisanship and the persistent hierarchies within the international security system that privilege certain victims and downplay others have led to a growing criticism in the Global South, where meaning-making, truth, and justice are articulated through different histories, solidarities, and horizons of struggle.

Despite these clear parallels in occupation, expansion, and global response, many struggle to see them, particularly those who display Ukrainian and Israeli flags side by side in their social media profiles. For them, the global order is structured by a stark Orientalist binary between freedom and despotism, the civilized and the barbaric, casting Western support for Ukraine and Israel as equally justifiable on the same moral grounds rather than as partisan alignment.

Within this context, only those who are willing to look beyond the media's lazy Manichaean frames can see how entangled narratives of heroic resistance and genocidal victimhood simultaneously drive and conceal imperial expansion and genocidal violence. Both Ukraine and Gaza show how entrenched power continues to sustain violence—whether through a settler-colonial legacy in Gaza or through Ukraine's postimperial and decolonial struggle for independence—by casting entire peoples as threats and justifying their subjugation in the name of permanent security: absolute safety from present and future threats by destroying anticipated threats now.

Colonial Hierarchies and Uneven Sovereignties

Colonial orders continue to shape how sovereignty, agency, and suffering are recognized or denied within the international system. In Gaza, the ongoing violence is a result of a settler-colonial order, through which the conquest of Palestinian land, population displacements, and the systematic domination of the remaining population have been entrenched and normalized for decades.[3] Within the framework established by Zionism and the foundation of the Israeli state, the settler-colonial structures imposed on Palestinians have created an inevitable dependency through which the colonial aspect is intertwined with the denial of

3 Una McGahern, "The Practice of Siege Warfare: Reckoning with War, Genocide and Settler Colonialism in Palestine," *Journal of Genocide Research*, September 11, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2025.2555627.

Palestinian sovereignty: Israel enjoys the full privileges of Westphalian sovereignty, while Palestine remains occupied and excluded from the legal mechanisms of the international system that could otherwise offer protection. As a result of this settler-colonial dynamic, Palestine cannot even be considered independently of Israel, and Palestinian nationality and statehood can only be envisioned with Israel's permission. The colonial entailments of the international system continue to shape Palestinian claims to self-determination. The so-called peace deal agreed upon in October 2025 envisions a colonial-style trusteeship governance reminiscent of the interwar years.

At the same time, it is also true that the growing global public reaction to the genocidal destruction of Gaza has pushed an increasing number of states to recognize Palestinian sovereignty and statehood. As of now, 157 countries officially recognize Palestine, with 20 of them doing so after October 7, 2023. These countries include EU members such as Spain and Ireland, as well as some of Israel's historical allies such as the United Kingdom, France, Australia, and Canada. Yet, the meaning of such state recognition when a population is being subjected to ethnic cleansing—underway in the West Bank—remains unclear. Few can be surprised that many Palestinians regard such recognition less as a step toward protection than as an attempt to soothe escalating public outrage, especially as the geographical basis of a "two-state solution" was vitiated long ago by relentless Israeli settlement expansion. Core principles that the liberal international order has prized—peace and security, both embedded in the UN Charter as the rights of a recognized state—remain nullified when the only mechanism capable of halting atrocities has been effectively mutilated by the United Nations Security Council's veto power.

Thus, the debate remains confined within the boundaries of the colonial question, unable to move beyond the structures that produced the conflict in the first place. Even Western leaders have stated openly that Israel serves as a proxy for Western interests by carrying out what the German chancellor described as their "dirty work." A senior German newspaper editor declared that the Israeli prime minister is "the avant-garde of the West."[4] The confines of this colonial order reveal that Palestinian statehood is not determined by the accepted norm of self-determination but remains contingent on the consent of hegemonic powers, thereby exposing how sovereignty itself is unevenly distributed within the international system.

Unlike Palestine, Ukraine holds a clearly defined place within the international society of states. While this formal recognition gives it a stronger

4 Ulf Poschardt, "Netanjahu ist die Avantgarde des Westens," *Die Welt*, October 6, 2024, https://www.welt.de/debatte/plus253823450/Netanjahu-ist-die-Avantgarde-des-Westens.html.

position, it does not shield Ukraine from the colonial dynamics and logics that structure global politics. In historical terms, Ukraine rather has an ambiguous position within the global postcolonial landscape. Many Ukrainian scholars describe coloniality in relation to the country's liminality between Russia and Europe.[5] As the Estonian political scientist Maria Mälksoo also argues, Ukraine's "insufficient postcoloniality" stems from its dual condition between Russia and the West—having been subjected to imperial domination on the one hand and striving to be fully recognized as part of "the West" on the other.[6] This in-betweenness posits Ukraine, first, as a site of geopolitical contestation and, second, as a case where colonial legacies remain less visible in dominant global narratives.

From the Ukrainian perspective, Russia's war is an act of imperial aggression, and the Ukrainian resistance belongs within the broader decolonial struggle. Yet this self-understanding does not resonate globally, as many countries in the Global South interpret the war through different lenses: not as colonial, but as Russia's justified defense against geopolitical encroachment by Western, NATO, and US interests. This perception is reinforced by Ukraine's past participation in the US-led war against and occupation of Iraq.

For all that, tensions within Ukraine's relationship with the West have become increasingly visible. On the one hand, Western publics have shown growing hesitation and fatigue in sustaining military and economic support for a prolonged war. On the other hand, Ukrainian intellectuals have grown increasingly critical of Western epistemological dominance—particularly the persistent "Russocentric" framing of the region—and decry "epistemic injustice."[7] On the battleground, impatient ceasefire calls and peace proposals from Western countries ignore Ukrainian demands and undermine Ukrainian political agency; in the discursive sphere, local knowledge is perceived to be marginalized through "Westsplaining"

5 Maria Mayerchyk and Olga Plakhotnik, "Uneventful Feminist Protest in Post-Maidan Ukraine: Nation and Colonialism Revisited," in *Postcolonial and Postsocialist Dialogues*, ed. Redi Koobak, Madina Tlostanova, and Suruchi Thapar-Björkert (Routledge, 2021), 121–37.

6 Maria Mälksoo, "The Postcolonial Moment in Russia's War Against Ukraine," *Journal of Genocide Research* 25, nos. 3–4 (2022): 471–81.

7 Daria Popil, "Epistemic Injustice," *Ukrainian Decolonial Glossary*, accessed October 17, 2025, https://decolonialglossary.com.ua/epistemic-injustice-en.

that disregards Eastern European perspectives.[8] Taken together, these dynamics expose the deep asymmetry between Ukraine's sovereign right to self-determination and the West's perception of it as a passive object of geopolitical competition—which inevitably leads to frustration among Ukrainian political elites and intellectuals.

Even though this hierarchy suffocates Ukraine itself, Ukraine still mirrors and reproduces the same logic in its position on Palestine because its material and moral dependency to sustain the war against Russia creates a persistent dilemma. Despite its official recognition of the state of Palestine, and despite promoting decolonial narratives against Western dominance, Ukraine's ideological and strategic alignment with the West is clearly reflected in its positioning during the genocide in Gaza, where Ukraine stands by Israel. As a result, Ukraine's alignment with the West ultimately reaffirms and reinforces existing power structures in global politics and undermines the consistency of decolonial arguments advanced by Ukrainian scholars.

Genocidal Warfare and Permanent Security

By painting *Guernica* in 1937, Pablo Picasso crystallized the terror of civilian bombing into a vivid, monochromatic indictment of the world and illustrated the horrors of mass violence once modern war turns people into targets. Today, Palestinian artist Malak Mattar's *No Words* (2024) depicts a live-streamed genocide in Gaza with similar intent, exposing the human cost of modern warfare. Thinking these two art pieces together, almost a century between them, shows that while technologies change, genocidal warfare—warfare against entire populations, as opposed to their armed forces—does not. The dynamics that enable and legitimize mass atrocities persist as before: the drive for permanent security, the criminally utopian aspiration of states, and those seeking to found them, to achieve absolute or perfect safety by confronting not only immediate threats but imagined future ones. This preemptive logic marks entire peoples as killable, making their destruction ungrievable.[9] In each case,

8 Tereza Hendl, Olga Burlyuk, Mila O'Sullivan, and Aizada Arystanbek, "(En)Countering Epistemic Imperialism: A Critique of 'Westsplaining' and Coloniality in Dominant Debates on Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," *Contemporary Security Policy* 45, no. 2 (2023): 176–78.

9 Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003).

violence against civilians is legitimized through narratives that cast victims as dangerous—or potentially dangerous—security threats. The unchanging logic of permanent security reveals itself through different political vocabularies across Gaza and Ukraine.

Russia's campaign against Ukraine begins with an explicit denial of Ukrainian statehood and identity, a claim articulated at the highest levels of power and amplified by the media. Vladimir Putin's essay "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians" frames Ukrainians as part of a single Russian civilizational space and treats Ukrainian nationhood as an artificial political project.[10] This denial of Ukrainian political and cultural existence is utilized by senior Russian figures in propaganda and public debates—not only to defeat but also to destroy Ukraine as a state and erase "Ukrainianism."[11]

In Russia's war discourse, an eliminationist vocabulary all but sacralizes violence against Ukrainians as a continuation of the Great Patriotic War, in which the Soviet Union is remembered as having sacrificed over twenty million lives to defeat fascist Germany and its allies. Russian authorities today are claiming the nation was a victim of genocide in the German-led siege of Leningrad. They go so far as to link the campaign against "fascist," NATO-backed Ukraine to the fascist forces besieging wartime Leningrad—forces that included troops from states that would later become NATO members. In this way, Russian expansionism is conveniently classed as forward defense—permanent security—and historically vouchsafed as genocide prevention, seemingly copying the Israeli model of expansionism ("Greater Israel") based on preventing a "second Holocaust."[12]

The trope of "denazification" is used to degrade ordinary Ukrainians into fascists and to justify their cultural eradication, as evident in Timofey Sergeytsev's call, on April 5, 2022, for

10 Vladimir Putin, "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians," Kremlin.ru, July 12, 2021, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181.

11 Yuliya Krylova-Grek, "Dehumanizing the 'Enemy': Hate Speech Directed at Ukrainians in Russian Media," *Baltic Worlds* 15, nos. 3–4 (2022): 41–45.

12 Noah Krasman, "The Paradox of Genocide in Modern Russia: Evolving Narratives of the Siege of Leningrad During the 'Great Patriotic Operation,'" *Journal of Genocide Research* 25, nos. 3–4 (2023): 403–17; Nils Gilman, Zachariah Mampilly, and A. Dirk Moses, "The New Politics of Territorial Expansion," *Noema Magazine*, May 29, 2025, https://www.noemamag.com/the-new-politics-of-territorial-expansion.

the denazification of Ukraine.[13] Hardline propagandists, such as Ramzan Kadyrov, have also employed a demonizing language: "shaitans" (evils), "Bandera dogs," "holy cleansing." And senior officials, such as Dmitry Medvedev, have publicly debated Ukraine's disappearance rather than a conventional military defeat.[14] Together with imperial framings of the "Russian world" as a civilizational rescue mission, these frames of denial, demonization, moral inversion, and colonial revival form a mechanism that renders annihilation of Ukrainians thinkable and morally justifiable in Russian society.[15]

In the case of Gaza, Palestinians are actively demonized as "Nazis," "terrorists," and "Amalek" and depicted as subhuman "beasts" intent on committing genocide.[16] As a consequence, their suffering remains largely erased from policy debates and media narratives that depict it as self-inflicted by Hamas practices of human shielding. One of the most frequently invoked concepts for understanding the dehumanization of Palestinians is Judith Butler's notion of "ungrievable death." "Ungrievable lives" are typically those of racialized, colonized, or enemy populations—groups cast outside the boundaries of the "human."[17] Such lives become ungrievable when violence against these groups is framed as acceptable—if not left entirely invisible.

Beyond these more obvious strategies of demonizing the enemy, euphemisms are also utilized to normalize mass atrocities against civilians. In the Gaza case, references to "human shields" dehumanize the civilians and juxtapose them with "terrorists" or depict them, including slaughtered children, as "collateral damage." As Zygmunt Bauman notes, labeling victims as "collateral damage" serves to facilitate the digestibility of their killings and sustain the uninterrupted violence.[18]

13 Originally published in the Russian outlet RIA Novosti, the article was subsequently deleted. See Clara Apt, "Russia's Eliminationist Rhetoric Against Ukraine: A Collection," *Just Security*, October 8, 2025, https://www.justsecurity.org/81789/russias-eliminationist-rhetoric-against-ukraine-a-collection.

14 Krylova-Grek, "Dehumanizing the Enemy" (see note 11).

15 Ian Garner, "'We've Got to Kill Them': Responses to Bucha on Russian Social Media Groups," *Journal of Genocide Research* 25, nos. 3–4 (2023): 418–25.

16 Tamir Sorek, "Mainstreaming a Genocidal Imagination in Israeli Society: Settler-Colonialism, Settler Anxiety, and Biblical Cues," *Journal of Genocide Research*, February 6, 2025, https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2025.2456321.

17 Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (Verso, 2009).

18 Zygmunt Bauman, *Collateral Damage: Social Inequalities in a Global Age* (Polity, 2011).

In both cases, the dominant side reserves the right to kill and maim as many civilians on the other side as it deems necessary to feel secure. In theory, the war could be permanent. And in both cases, it is carried out in the name of self-defense. Russia even claimed it was stopping the genocide of Russian speakers in eastern Ukraine, cynically copying the NATO operation to protect Kosovo Albanians in 1999—a proposition later rejected by the International Court of Justice (ICJ).[19] By declaring entire populations to be potential security threats, colonial dynamics provide the structural foundation upon which genocidal warfare becomes possible, politically justifiable, and legally unpenalized. It creates hierarchies of human worth, legitimizes territorial conquest, and normalizes the destruction of entire communities as necessary for the preservation of an "order" or "security" of selected nations and states. In this sense, genocide functions as a modality of colonial counterinsurgency.

Yet, despite these structural realities, the concept of genocide occupies a distinct position in international law—it is often called the "crime of crimes," carrying greater moral and legal weight than war crimes or crimes against humanity. The narrowness of genocide's legal definition exposes an unsettling practice. The scale of devastation on the battleground or the evident likelihood of mass violence imposed upon civilians is not, on its own, sufficient to hold perpetrators accountable for genocide. International law rather focuses on the explicit intent of annihilating an ethnic, religious, or identity group. This allows mass civilian killings to be legally reframed as justifiable if tied to an alleged military objective rather than an articulated plan of extermination.[20]

Genocide narratives around Ukraine and Gaza showcase how international law, coloniality, and global hierarchies shape whose suffering is legible, whose claims are recognized, and whose violence upon victims becomes normalized and justified. In line with the geopolitical divisions, the international legal order revealed

19 Shpend Kursani, "Beyond Putin's Analogies: The Genocide Debate on Ukraine and the Balkan Analogy Worth Noting," *Journal of Genocide Research* 25, nos. 3–4 (2023): 371–83; Iryna Marchuk and Aloka Wanigasuriya, "Beyond the False Claim of Genocide: Preliminary Reflections on Ukraine's Prospects in Its Pursuit of Justice at the ICJ," in *The Russian Invasion of Ukraine: Victims, Perpetrators, Justice, and the Question of Genocide*, ed. Diana Dumitru and A. Dirk Moses (Routledge, 2024), 256–78.

20 A. Dirk Moses, *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression* (Cambridge University Press, 2021).

fractures, particularly in how the ICJ and the International Criminal Court (ICC) were mobilized to investigate the genocide claims. While the Ukraine case was swiftly initiated and supported by Western states, gaining traction with the resolutions of the European Parliament, the Gaza case has been politically denied and resisted by most Western powers and most of the EU institutions. Countering the West's capacity to activate international legal mechanisms in line with its geopolitical interests, Global South actors—especially South Africa, with increasing support from Latin American and other states—initiated the Palestine case in the ICJ by claiming that Israel was breaching its obligations under the UN Genocide Convention.

Meanwhile, the ICC, which initiates prosecutions rather than waits for suits, was compelled into action. In the Palestine/Gaza situation, the court confirmed jurisdiction in 2021 and opened a full investigation into crimes committed since 2014. In May 2024, the prosecutor requested—and in November 2024, the judges issued—arrest warrants for Israeli and Hamas leaders for war crimes (including "starvation as a method of warfare") and crimes against humanity, but not genocide. In the case of Ukraine, the ICC has issued several arrest warrants, including for Vladimir Putin, for war crimes such as unlawful deportation of children and attacks on civilian infrastructure, again without genocide charges. Genocide is an inevitable question in the investigation for both cases. Yet, the legal limitation of the concept and the high threshold of proving genocidal intent have led the court to focus on war crimes and crimes against humanity instead.

In line with this legalistic stance, most Western political leaders have refrained from embracing the genocide label even in the case of Ukraine. Even though the West has demonstrated a sharp and cohesive alignment with Ukraine in framing its war against Russia—through narratives of defending European security, protecting "civilization" from "barbarism," safeguarding the liberal international order, shielding Europe from authoritarianism, and positioning Ukraine as a European victim of Russian aggression—many European states and the EU have nonetheless refrained from explicitly using the term *genocide* by insisting that the determination of genocide falls within the jurisdiction of international courts rather than political leaders.

While some national leaders—including Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, and Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin—did invoke the term *genocide* in parliamentary speeches as early as April 2022, more prominent figures, such as French President Emmanuel Macron, warned against such framing, suggesting it could dangerously escalate the conflict. Undeterred, Ukrainian scholars and their supporters in the United States energetically advanced the case for genocide in Ukraine yet remained largely silent about Ukraine's support for Israel's war in Gaza, which is widely recognized as genocidal.

Moral Contradictions: Ukraine, Gaza, and the Global Hierarchy of Suffering

We have observed in our academic circles and in public debates after Hamas's October 7 attack that coupling Ukraine and Gaza raised eyebrows. Many Ukrainians found this comparison unsettling, viewing the Hamas assault as detrimental to the Palestinian cause and any parallel with Ukraine as inappropriate. From their perspective, Ukraine—as a sovereign state and a legitimate member of the liberal international order—is entitled to international support that should not be relativized through such analogies. This stance has led many intellectuals to refrain from drawing connections between the two cases and has revealed a form of cognitive dissonance whereby they position themselves on the side of Israel—an accepted member of the "civilized" nations—and disregard the ongoing human suffering in Gaza as self-inflicted.

At the same time, a shift among certain Ukrainian commentators is observable—particularly those who initially expressed strong affinity with Israel after October 7. In light of repeated Israeli sabotage of ceasefires and the enforcement of famine on Gaza, they now appear increasingly open to comparisons grounded in colonial frameworks and discourses of genocide. This shift may indicate a growing recognition, sympathy, or perhaps performative solidarity with Palestinian suffering, especially as Gaza's plight gains wider international attention and increasing resonance across the Global South.

However, geopolitical expectations of support from the West and wartime alliances can blur moral boundaries just as they distort historical accountability. Ukraine's dependence on Western military and political support constrains its official position, leading the country to align itself with Israel. This alignment has at times produced morally and historically sensitive contradictions. One example of it appeared in Israeli Ambassador (to Ukraine) Michael Brodsky's downplaying of the controversial use of nationalist symbols in Ukraine by framing them as expressions of anti-Russian rather than antisemitic sentiment. Brodsky has framed Ukrainians' praise of Stepan Bandera as understandable given their need for national heroes, despite earlier Israeli condemnations of Bandera and other Nazi collaborators.[21]

Against this background, debates emerge around public and political attention. Those who feel uneasy about the growing global focus on the genocide in Gaza—arguing that it diverts attention from other conflicts such as those in Ukraine, Sudan, or elsewhere—often raise the question, "Why the focus on Gaza?" Palestinian scholar Nadim Khoury, from the University of Inland Norway, was confronted with it at the Memory Studies

21 "Israel Tells Russia to Not Lecture It on Holocaust Memory, in Spat over Envoy Remarks," *Times of Israel*, June 23, 2023, https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-tells-russia-to-not-lecture-it-on-holocaust-memory-in-spat-over-envoy-remarks/.

Association Annual Conference in Prague in July 2025 following his presentation on the Oslo Peace Accords. Khoury acknowledged the suffering occurring in other parts of the world but noted that Gaza's visibility is partly tied to the protracted nature of the conflict.

We would add: Because Israel is regarded by Western powers as a strategic outpost—indeed, as an actor that performs their "dirty work" in the name of civilizational values—those values and interests are perceived to be at stake in a way that they are not in other cases. Western publics are increasingly shocked that their governments are allowing this violence in the name of combating terrorism. According to Khoury, this aspect, coupled with the active role of the Palestinian diaspora, particularly in the United States, has helped sustain and enhance global solidarity with Gaza.

We also see that the reason for this heightened attention cannot be separated from the parties to the conflict in Gaza and Palestine generally: the State of Israel, which grounds its political legitimacy in its self-proclaimed role as the representative of Jewish victims of the Holocaust. Holocaust memory was immediately invoked on October 7: it was a "Holocaust in a day," "Holocaust 2.0," and "the largest massacre of Jews since the Holocaust." Hamas was straightaway framed as genocidal terrorists, pure evil, like the Nazis. In turn, scholars soon warned of a genocidal Israeli response.[22] States in the Global North and South largely ranged on opposite sides of the argument. Increasingly, publics in the Global North have concluded that Israel is committing genocide despite the invocation of Holocaust memory to justify and frame it as legitimate self-defense.

This development points to a tectonic shift in global memory. For decades, Holocaust memory has shaped cosmopolitan understandings of violence prevention. As the greatest evil in human history, it assumed the status of a universal moral source: the imperative of "never again." In this way, the agentless "exemplary victim" has become the ultimate benchmark of victimhood, with Jewish victims cast as the quintessential victims of modern history. Those seeking to claim they were victims of genocide have often felt compelled to analogize with the Holocaust to be legible and visible. This singularization of suffering has made it virtually impossible in the West to acknowledge any perpetration of a crime committed in the name of Jews by the Israeli state. Its pursuit of permanent security has been granted limitless license.

Yet the moral monopoly of Holocaust memory is beginning to fracture. Another historical evil—well understood in the Global South—the slow death of long-term colonial occupation, exploitation, and settler-colonial replacement—is gradually being understood by Western publics. What is more, as scholarship on "complex victims" reminds us, individuals

22 Among many: Raz Segal, "A Textbook Case of Genocide," *Jewish Currents*, October 13, 2023, https://jewishcurrents.org/a-textbook-case-of-genocide.

may experience injustice and violence while also being capable of inflicting harm—making them both victims and perpetrators.[23] The same holds true for ethnic groups and states. Ignoring this complexity risks granting victims an unquestionable moral authority, which, in turn, enables the reproduction of violence such as that evident in Gaza—even if it is in different forms and through different means.

Concluding with the tension between "reason" and "treason" in *No More Peace!*, we find ourselves in a historical moment where the "voice of reason" is increasingly silenced and vilified, and even antiwar members of the Jewish diaspora and Israelis are being branded as antisemitic and accused of betrayal. And yet, even so, we also know that the "voice of reason" has not completely disappeared. Across the world, inspiring acts of protest and solidarity challenge genocidal warfare in all its forms. A growing global call insists on the universality of human suffering and the urgency of ending mass violence. One such example is the Ukrainian letter of solidarity with Palestinian people, in which Ukrainian scholars and activists publicly expressed solidarity with Palestinians and rejected hierarchies of suffering. The presence of such resistance reminds us that silencing can never be total because resistance finds its way through the political and moral order.

A consistent solidarity with invaded and occupied nations requires that their struggles are not considered separately or as competing but as entangled, even united. Their liberation depends not on contesting hierarchies of suffering, but on a shared challenge to the structures of domination that enable war, occupation, and genocide. Ukraine and Palestine flags should logically appear side by side in social media profiles. Both states are confronting powerful neighbors who utilize World War II victimization narratives to justify their expansionism in the name of permanent security.

Understanding this common experience compels us to mobilize solidarities that transcend these common hierarchies. There is a particular responsibility to demand consistency in normative claims and to stand in solidarity with Palestinian scholars and communities as well as Ukrainian ones. This means confronting the very global hierarchies from which both groups suffer—albeit in different ways and to different degrees.

23 Erica Bouris, *Complex Political Victims* (Kumarian, 2007).